island therefore lies in Sri Lankan waters. Sri Lankan Naval Vessels patrol the Sri Lanka waters around Kachatheevu Island. It has also been alleged by Indian fishermen that Sri Lankan Navy resort to firing.

The Indian Navy/Coast Guard and Sri Lankan Navy regularly undertake coordinated patrolling in the Palk Bay, within their respective and agreed waters of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). This coordinated patrolling includes areas near Kachatheevu Island also. The effectiveness of such patrolling is regularly reviewed through meetings between Indian Navy/Coast Guard and Sri Lankan Navy. During such review meetings, it is also emphasized by the Indian side, that Indian fishermen apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy should not be harmed.

Further, to educate the Indian fishermen, community interaction programmes are also undertaken by the Coast Guard to advise the Indian fishermen community not to cross the International Maritime Boundary Line into Sri Lankan waters, for fishing purposes. These community interaction programmes emphasize that such poaching is an international offence making the fishermen liable to be apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Civilian Casualties in Landmines

1307. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that according to a survey concluded in March this year, the number of civilian casualties caused by landmines in Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu following the 2002 military build-up, adds upto an alarming 779;

(b) whether Government is also aware of the fact that once landmines are laid under the ground, they remain potential killers for decades, in peace as much as in war and locating and defusing landmines is a tedious and dangerous business; and

(c) if so, the reasons for India not becoming member of Ottawa convention that has a goal of a mine free world?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government is not aware of any such survey report.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) India had participated in the Ottawa Process as an 'observer' but did not join the Convention. Reservations of the Government pertain primarily to the absence of any acknowledgement of the legitimate security concerns of countries, which necessitate the use of Anti Personnel Landmines (APLs) within valid security norms and in observance of internationally acknowledged and well define safety parameters. India is however committed to the eventual elimination of APLs in a manner which would address both the humanitarian concerns and legitimate security requirements of States. India is a party to the Amended Portocol—II of the 1980 Inhumane Weapons Convention (Certain Conventional Weapons) (CCW) which deals with APLs. India's armed forces have scrupulously followed the provision of Amended Protocol—II of (Certain Conventional Weapons) (CCW).

Besides, India is actively engaged in the ongoing discussions on the restriction on mines other than anti personnel mines.

Modernisation of Ordnance factories

1308. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ordnance factories are getting damaged due to frequent fires;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to modernize Ordnance factories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) There have been three fire accidents during the current year. The financial loss caused in the first two is Rs. 3,02,56,000/- and Rs. 2,19,31,500/- respectively. The financial loss for the third case is yet to be determined.

(b) In the first case, no specific cause could be ascertained by the Board of inquiry. In the second case, the fire was probably caused due to electric short circuit. The cause for the third case would be known only after the Board of Enquiry report is received.